JONATHAN LATIMER

By ARTHUR B. WELLS

1. ROBERT LATIMER.
2. CAPT. ROBERT LATIMER, JR. (1664).
3. JONATHAN LATIMER (1698).
4. COL. JONATHAN LATIMER (1724).
5. JOSEPH LATIMER (1776).
6. JONATHAN LATIMER (1803).

It was a beautiful fall evening in Keene Valley, New York. The mountain sides were glorious in their autumn tints, and there was a chill in the air, which made it comfortable for my little family to gather before the fire where the mantel, that had been built in 1841 for my grandfather's home in Illinois, had been placed.

When the children were little I used to tell them whenever we gathered before this mantel, the story of my grandfather's life. The children were now grown up, but my daughter had, as of old, placed herself upon the floor with her head against my knee.

"Dear Father," she said, "do tell us the story of Grandfather again."

STORY

Prior to 1661 a mariner named Robert Latimer came to New London (C 144 231-2). He became the owner of the ship *Hopewell* and a large land owner (C 288-9) and had a son named Robert Latimer, Jr., who grew to be tall, strong and wealthy (C 288). A dispute arose between New London and Lyme as to a boundary. The inhabitants agreed to settle their dispute by a combat between two champions to be chosen by each for that purpose. New London chose Robert Latimer, Jr., as one of its champions, and Lyme chose Mathew Griswold, Jr., who became the wealthiest man in Lyme, a man born to rule. (Br. 19.)

One day the citizens of the two towns gathered on the disputed land and their champions fought with their fists until victory was awarded to Lyme. This is the only record of a trial by combat, a mode of settling disputes which was in practice in England in old days, I have heard of in America (C 171, S. Vol. 2, pg. 15).

Afterwards the granddaughter, Lucretia Griswold, of Mathew Griswold, Jr., married the grandson, Jonathan Latimer, of Robert Latimer, Jr., and from that union we are descended (S Lynde, Vol. 3, Supp.).

Lucretia Griswold's great grandmother was Ann Wolcott, the wife of Matthew Griswold.

Robert Latimer, Jr., held many offices of trust in the community. He was for many years Deputy and a member of the Governor's Council. (B 314.)

Robert Latimer, Jr., had a son named Jonathan who was born about 1698, and was prominent and successful (B 315). Jonathan was one of the officers (captain) in charge of Governor Saltonstall's funeral, who was buried with military honors September 20, 1724 (C 282).

Capt. Geo Dawson was born in England 1643.
He was engaged in the Civil war which resulted
in the execution of Charles I and the subduing of
the Irish by Cromwell and was dangerously
wounded in an engagement in Ireland.
In this situation he was cast upon the
hospitality of Lord John Boroidl of Cork
who had an only daughter Anne
Boroidl who became a ministering
angel to him in his critical condition
and great need. He recovered and
persuaded her to marry him and
share his fortunes in this new world.

Among the prominent citizens was Judge Daniel Wetherell (C 253 363). The wife of Judge Wetherell was Grace Brewster (C 363), the granddaughter of the godly and much loved Elder William Brewster, who came to this country in the Mayflower (May 9-16).

Daniel Wetherell, from 1680-1710 was more prominent in public affairs than any other inhabitant in the town. He was Town Clerk, Moderator, Justice, Judge of the County Court and Judge of Probate (C 363, Br.).

Of this marriage of Judge Wetherell and Grace Brewster there was born a daughter named Mary Wetherell who married the Reverend George Denison (C 363). Reverend George Denison, born March 28, 1671, was the son of John Denison and the grandson of Captain George Denison, a graduate of Harvard and a lawyer of New London (R). Reverend George Denison had six daughters who were considered the flowers of the young society of New London. (C 334-335.)

Captain George Denison's name first appeared in the records in 1651. He was the most conspicuous soldier in New London. There was no character in New London bolder, and of more active spirit. He was Captain of New London County forces in the King Philip War and was in the great swamp fight of December 19, 1675. Also served the next year in command of the forces raised by him as Provost-Marshal who pursued the Narragansett and Wampanoag Indians and succeeded in defeating them and capturing the Chief of the Narragansett Tribe, Canonchet, who was brought to Stonington, Connecticut, and on his refusal to make peace with the English was shot.

Soon after coming to New London he was employed in various offices of trust and honor — such as Commissioner and Deputy to the General Court for 15 sessions (C 332 335 185-7 B 539).

Among the daughters was Boradel Denison with whom Jonathan Latimer fell in love and married April 6, 1720. By this marriage there was blended the blood of Elder Brewster (the

religious leader of the *Mayflower* and through whose zeal and skill its sailing was finally effected), the blood of the Latimers, one of the most prominent of the New London families (Br. Vol 1, pgs. 3-19), and the blood of Captain George Denison.

It is said on page 383 of *Soldiers of King Philip's War*, by George M. Bodge, "There is no nobler figure in all the annals of the American Indians than Canonchet. He had become the real head and life of the Indians. His capture was the death blow to their hopes."

A son, Jonathan Latimer (2nd) was born May 27, 1724. This son, like his father, grew tall and strong, graduated from Yale (A Vol. 1, pg. 48) and married January 28, 1746, Lucretia Griswold, the daughter of Reverend George Griswold, pastor of the church of the East Society of Lyme, grandson of Mathew Griswold, Jr., of the "trial by combat" fame (C 616, S., Vol. 1, pt. 2, pgs. 398-407).

Lucretia was a descendant of Lord Latimer of England, the Van de Lindens of Holland, and the great English Roman Catholic family of Digby (S Vol. 1, pt. 2, 2 & Supp.3).

Rev. George Griswold graduated from Yale in 1717, being second in his class. His salutatory oration, written in Latin, is now preserved among the files of Yale University, one of the oldest Yale documents of this sort known to exist. Yale College was then at Saybrook, Connecticut. It was moved to New Haven, Connecticut, later that year (S Vol. 2, 34-41, Br. Vol. 1, pg. 19). Rev. George Griswold married June 22, 1725, Hannah Lynde, daughter of Nathaniel Lynde, who had been one of the Chief Patrons and the first Treasurer of Yale College. (S Vol 2, pg. 34; Vol. 1, pt. 2, pgs. 396-401-407.)

By this marriage some of the beauty, the soft and regular features and fine complexions hereditary with the Digby-Lynde families were blended with the tall, large-boned and powerful Griswold characteristic features (S Vol. 2, pgs. 34-41).

When Jonathan Latimer (2nd) married Lucretia Griswold,

he married into a distinguished family. Lucretia's first cousin, Mathew Griswold, was Deputy Governor of Connecticut as a Colony, and Lieutenant Governor after the Revolution, and later Chief Justice of Connecticut, and her nephews, George Griswold and Nathaniel Lynde, were the princely merchants of New York (S Vol. 2, pgs. 42-52-73).

It is not strange that Jonathan Latimer (2nd) born in these troublesome times and with the blood of Captain Denison flowing in his veins, should have turned early toward a military career.

When the French Indian War broke out, he, as Captain, August 11, 1757, then 33 years of age, sailed from New London to Albany to defend the country from an invasion from Canada (C 471).

In March, 1758, he was commissioned by the Connecticut Assembly ~~Junior~~ Captain of the Fifth Company of the Second Regiment with Jabez Howland as his First Lieutenant. In March, 1759, he was commissioned ~~Junior~~ Captain of the Fourth Company, Fourth Regiment (C 532, Col. 97-188-228).

His regiment was actively engaged during this war, and in the disastrous battle of Ticonderoga, under command of Major Putnam, was used in protecting the retreat of the famous Highland Regiment, "The Black Watch." This regiment was nearly obliterated, for General Abercombie ordered them six times to charge against the enemy's breastworks, which Marquis de Montcalm had protected with felled trees whose branches faced outward. Captain Latimer's first lieutenant, Howland, was killed in this battle. (C 532, His. Vol. 2, pgs. 76-78-185; N. Y. Vol. 4, pg. 732, Chap. 2. Col. note bottom pg. 99.)

During this war there is a record of one Rufus Chapman, a member of Captain Latimer's company, being captured and taken to Montreal as a prisoner (Col. 242). From 1769-1776, Jonathan Latimer was Justice of the Peace for County of New London (Col. Vol. XV, 9, 277; Col. Vol. XIII, 174, 289, 420, 577).

When the Lexington alarm was given Captain Latimer and

his company hurried to Lexington and he fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill (C 513-516; A Vol. 1, pg. 48; His. Chap. VIII, Conn. 18, B 96).

During the Revolutionary War Captain Latimer was practically in service all the time. He was Captain of the Third Company, Seventh Connecticut Regiment, when Nathan Hale enlisted as his First Lieutenant. He was promoted to Major July 6, 1775, when the Seventh Regiment was under command of Washington during the siege of Boston. (Conn. 79, 80, 403, 433, 504, C 515, Reg. 341, C 513-515. Note C.)

After British evacuation of Boston the Seventh Regiment was ordered to New York for service under Washington.

To reinforce Washington in New York, the Wadsworth Brigade was raised in June, 1776, and Jonathan Latimer was made Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fourth Battalion. This battalion served in New York and on Long Island and was caught in the retreat and panic of September 6, 1776, when the city of New York was abandoned, in the masterly retreat accomplished by Washington by which he saved his army (Conn. 403).

In October, 1776, he was promoted to Colonel of the Third Connecticut Militia Regiment (Conn. 433).

Creasy mentions the battle of Saratoga as one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world. The unsuccessful attack on Quebec, the defeat of the American forces in the battle of Long Island, the occupation by the British of New York and later Philadelphia, the loss of Fort Washington and Fort Lee, had greatly disheartened the Americans when the British launched their invasion of New York from Canada under General Burgoyne.

The British made this invasion with careful preparation and with distinguished officers. It was planned in London that General Howe should co-operate by moving to and beyond Albany to make a junction with Burgoyne's force, but instead of so doing, he launched his attack on Philadelphia. The invading force moved slowly down from Montreal. They captured Crown

Jonathan Latimer brothers Robert and Daniel
and son George (Ensign) and nephew Robert Jr
(Fifer) were also in Battle of Bunker Hill

Point and Ticonderoga, beat the American Army at Hubbarton and on September 17, 1777, advanced to and fortified a position only two miles distant from the camp of the Americans.

In the month of August two Connecticut Militia regiments, Colonel Latimer's and Colonel Cook's, were ordered to reinforce General Gates at Saratoga. They were assigned to General Poor's Continental Brigade under command of General Arnold (Conn. 504).

On September 18, 1777, Burgoyne advanced to overwhelm the American forces in command of General Gates who had his headquarters several miles back of the front line. The British troops were led by Burgoyne.

General Benedict Arnold had been sent by Washington to assist Gates and was in command of Poor's Brigade. He repeatedly begged Gates to let him attack, but Gates wanted to stay in his earthworks, in the rear of which he had the baggage wagons all packed ready for the retreat which he evidently anticipated (J B 187). Finally, Gates gave his reluctant consent and Arnold opened the attack on the British advance, but Gates refused at first to send reinforcements, and notwithstanding the attack was made with all the impetuosity and determined courage which characterized General Arnold, it was not successful (J B 187, D 287).

At this point Arnold was reinforced. Among these reinforcements were two Connecticut Regiments, Colonel Latimer's and Colonel Cook's (D 287-294, Cr. 314-317), which had just arrived at the field.

Arnold, not to be frustrated, took advantage of the shelter the woods afforded and by a rapid counter march fell suddenly on the British center. For four hours a stubborn contest continued until darkness ended it, and the Americans retired from the field in good order and without pursuit, claiming victory because they had stopped the British advance (CC 160, CV Vol. 4, pg. 153). So surely had they checked the British advance that they did not attempt to advance again until October 7, 1777, when

Burgoyne launched a movement to the left of the American position. This movement was reported to General Gage about noon, and he ordered General Morgan to take a circuitous route and gain the high ground on the right of the enemy, while General Poor's brigade, in which were Colonel Latimer's and Colonel Cook's regiments, were to advance against left. The movements were made with secrecy, the intervening woods enabling the troops to march without being seen.

The attack commenced on the left of the line, but within a few minutes the attack on the right was commenced, and the action became general.

At this point, General Arnold, who had been, after the battle of September 18th, deprived of his command by the jealousy of Gates and was at headquarters, could no longer endure a state of inaction. He called for his horse, a powerful brown charger, and springing on it galloped furiously to where the fight seemed to be the thickest. Gates saw him leave and sent an aide-de-camp to recall him, but Arnold spurred far in advance and placed himself at the head of the regiments that had been under him, which included Colonel Latimer's regiment. They welcomed their old commander with joyous shouts. As he outranked the officers on the field he took command and led them instantly upon the British center and then galloping along the American line he issued orders for a renewed and closer attack which was obeyed with alacrity. Arnold himself set the example of the most daring personal bravery, charging more than once with sword in hand into the English ranks. Burgoyne's whole force was soon compelled to retreat to their entrenched camp (D 293-4).

The left and center were in complete disorder, leaving six of their cannons in the hands of the Americans.

The British troops had scarcely entered their lines when the Americans, led by Arnold, pressed forward, under a destructive fire of grape shot and musketry, and assaulted their works throughout their whole extent.

The long and bloody contest was now carried on between the British behind their works and the Americans entirely exposed.

In the midst of this dreadful scene of blood and carnage, Arnold at the head of a band of brave fellows from Poor's and Patterson's brigades, rushing like tigers into the camp of Lord Balcarras and encountering the British troops at the point of the bayonet, dealt death and destruction in every quarter. From thence spurred boldly on, Arnold dashed through thick and thin to the extreme right of the British camp occupied by the Hessian troops where he was still more successful. (N pg. 174.) Colonel Latimer's regiment was in Poor's brigade.

At the close of the battle Arnold was severely wounded in the leg which had been wounded in his attack on Quebec, and the aide-de-camp sent by Gates to order him back for fear, as Gates expressed it, "he might do something rash," was able to reach him and give him Gates' order. (J B 195-6, Cr. 314-317, Cv. Vol. IV, pg. 156.)

Wounded as he was, he reluctantly left the field, but he had won the greatest battle of the Revolution for it resulted in the surrender of Burgoyne and the recognition by France of the American cause.

Had Arnold but died of his wound the name of Benedict Arnold as one of the great heroes of the Revolutionary War would be honored and a pride cannot be but cherished by the descendants of Jonathan Latimer for the part his regiment had in that victory.

Although Gates in his report ignored Arnold (D 290), he spoke of these two Connecticut regiments as "two excellent militia regiments from Connecticut commanded by Colonel Jonathan Latimer of New London and Thaddeus Cook of Wallingworth." They were in both battles, September 19 and October 7, 1777. In the first battle they lost more than any other two regiments in the field (Conn. 129, 504).

During the fierce fighting General Gates was safely at his

headquarters miles back from the front engaged for the greater part of the action in what began as an academic, but ended in being a very hot discussion on the merits of the Revolution with Sir Francis Clark who, taken prisoner after a wound from which he died, was lying upon the American Commander's bed (J B 196).

Sir Francis Clark in his will left a legacy to Gates' maid servant who had treated him with the greatest care and consideration. This legacy was paid by Captain Money, the British Deputy Quartermaster General, in depreciated Continental bills. When Burgoyne heard of this, he lost his temper, sent for the girl and asked her to keep the paper money and then sternly told Captain Money "to pay the legacy in hard guineas of British coinage without reference to the sum he had already paid." (J B 196-7.)

During October, 1779, a state convention for the ratification of the articles of confederation was held at Hartford. Colonel Jonathan Latimer was sent there as a Deputy from New London (C 504).

Colonel Latimer, with seven of his sons, among whom was Joseph Latimer, who was born June 8, 1776, moved from New London (Montville) to Tennessee in 1790. It was said that six of his sons and himself measured forty-two feet. They moved in emigrant wagons drawn by oxen, taking with them articles and provisions for use on the way. They reached the Ohio River at a point near where Pittsburgh now is and there they built boats, sufficient to convey wagons and animals, and, floating down the river, disembarked in Kentucky and finally settled near Nashville, Tennessee, at a place now called Gallitan. Colonel Latimer himself never lived to reach his contemplated home, he died on the journey (B 315-318). Why Colonel Latimer, then 66 years old, should have left New London where he held an honored position and taken the weary journey to the Southwest is not easy to understand.

It may have been due to a hyper-sensitiveness, because when Arnold led the British troops in their attack on New London in 1781, Colonel Latimer was censored for not taking a more active part in bringing forward the forces under his command to meet the enemy. His belief in Arnold, due to his close connection with him in the past, may have made him not anticipate that Arnold in that raid would act with the cruelty that he did. (Note D.)

Joseph Latimer had a son named Jonathan (my grandfather) who was born May 23, 1803 (B 322). On the frontiers in those days, there was much danger from the Indians. In an attack by Indians prior to the War of 1812 Joseph's tin cup on his knapsack was shot off and his brother, Robert, killed at his side. (B 321 and statement of Aunt Lou and Mother.)

As the country became more and more settled, the Latimers were prominent and their children attended the more aristocratic schools. Each boy at these schools had a Negro boy as an attendant, and Jonathan as a child was greatly shocked at a contest these little masters would have. Their little Negro slaves would be set up in a row and their masters would fight them with their fists. The boy who made his Negro's nose bleed first was the winner. (Told to me by Mother.)

Jonathan married Nancy West, daughter of Jacob West, who served in the War of 1812. In 1829 he freed his slaves and with his wife and three children then born — Emily Ann, born January 4, 1826; Jacob Alexander, born April 20, 1827, and Mary Jane, born January 14, 1829, went to Illinois (A Vol. 10, pg. 203G).

James Rutledge had come to Illinois from South Carolina by way of Tennessee (L98). He first settled on Concord Creek, flowing into the Sangamon River. He and his nephew, John Camron, who came to Illinois with him were millwrights by trade and they first intended to build a dam and erect a mill on Concord Creek, on land entered by them in Sections 26 and 27

T19, N.R. 7W of 3rd P.M., but they found as the summer advanced that the supply of water in the Creek was not sufficient for that purpose.

In 1828 Camron entered a high and beautiful ridge about seven miles south of where they lived and they decided to subdivide this ridge and build at that point a dam across the Sangamon River and erect a mill. They thereupon made a sub-division on this ridge, calling it New Salem, and began in 1828 the construction of the dam and mill which was completed in the fall of 1829 (L 7-9, 98).

There were a number of settlements situated around New Salem from seven to ten miles away. Rutledge built in 1829 a building called "The Rutledge Tavern" — the stone foundation of which measured 12 by 20 feet and contained four or five rooms (L 40-46, 58). It is probable that James Rutledge had become acquainted with the Latimers when he was in Tennessee.

In 1828 Rutledge and Camron began to boom the new town and in 1829 it grew fast.

Nathaniel Latimer, the son of Robert, who was killed by the Indians (B 321) or his uncle, Nathaniel (B 318, 322), came early in that year, and probably stayed at the Rutledge home on Concord Creek, for he entered on February 19, 1829, 80 acres in the section adjoining their home.

Jonathan Latimer's brother, Alexander, came to New Salem early in 1829 — he probably came the same time that Nathaniel did. Finally, as soon as Nancy, wife of Jonathan, was able to make the trip after the birth of Mary Jane, January 14, 1829, he with his wife and daughter Emily, then three years of age, son Jacob Alexander, then two years of age, and daughter Mary Jane, a babe in arms, came to Concord Creek and occupied the house of James Rutledge.

Ann Rutledge, then 16 years of age, lived with them and helped my grandmother in the care of the little children. The rest of the Rutledge family were in New Salem (Note A).

Abraham Lincoln's first appearance at New Salem was during April, 1831, when the flat boat he was piloting became stranded upon the Rutledge dam. This was the first loaded boat that had come down the Sangamon River (L 18).

The New Salem boom was in full force at this time. Every one believed in its future and undoubtedly every inhabitant able to come down to the river bank was there. Among these was my grandfather's younger brother, Alexander, who must have lent a helping hand to Lincoln in his effort to release his boat.

Evidently convinced of the future of New Salem, Lincoln about August 1, 1831, chose New Salem as the place to make his start in life (L 20), and Alexander Latimer became one of his cherished friends.

One day Alexander drove out to Concord Creek with Lincoln to visit his brother's family and introduced Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, which resulted in the great love and sorrow of Lincoln's life (told to me by Mother and Aunt Emily).

After her death Lincoln wrote to Alexander using these words, "Ann is dead and my heart is broken." His grief was so deep that his friends feared for his sanity.

Ann died in 1835. She was the loveliest and most lovable woman in New Salem.

After Lincoln's first election to the Presidency he answered his old friend Isaac Colgate who asked if it was true he ran a little wild about the Rutledge matter, "I did really. I ran off the track — it was my first love. I loved the woman dearly. She was a handsome girl and would have made a good loving wife. She was natural and quite intellectual, though not highly educated. I did honestly and truly love the girl and think often, often of her now." To one of his friends speaking of the Concord Cemetery where she was buried he said, "My heart is buried there." (L 76-8, H 48, 49. See *In the Footsteps of Lincoln*, by Ida M. Tarbell.)

There was a great contrast between the Lincoln who came to

New Salem and the Lincoln who left it six years later. He came unknown to the world, and as I believe unknown to himself. He left it in 1837 a man of power in Illinois, filled with a beautiful ambition — a deep spirituality and a boundless sympathy for his fellow-men.

My grandfather was a rare soul — a capable business man with a sympathy for his fellow-men like Lincoln's.

What were the influences that had helped to bring forth this wonderful development in Lincoln? It was not the boon companions of his first days in New Salem. It was, as it seems to me, the friendship of the men of worth and character of New Salem, and above all the great love of his life. It was New Salem and Ann Rutledge. Both lived only long enough to complete their work. Ann Rutledge died August 25, 1835, and New Salem was dying in 1837.

I believe to understand Lincoln, we must understand what New Salem and Ann Rutledge did for him. They prepared the ground that brought into expression the fundamentals of spirit and heart that made him so great and equal to the great burden life thrust upon him. Back of the spiritual development of many a man is his love of a woman.

There is a tradition in our family based upon the statement of Emily (Mrs. J. B. F. Chesney) who was three years old when my grandfather came to Concord Creek, and of her mother's father, Jacob West, who did not die until March 9, 1868, that he, Jacob West, had a law suit in 1837. He had no lawyer. Lincoln had just been admitted to the bar, and he employed Lincoln. (See note B.)

The case was lost. Lincoln said he had done Jacob West no good and declined to take a fee, but Mr. West insisted on paying him five dollars, whereupon Lincoln jumped upon a box in the store where the conversation occurred and called out to the crowd, "Hear ye! Hear ye! I have received my first retainer and am retained by Jacob West as his attorney for life." (Told to

me by Mother; verified by Aunt Emily who said it was told to her by her grandfather, Jacob West.)

My father, Frederick C. Wells, took my brother Frederick L. Wells, who was born July 9, 1860, East with him on one of his frequent business trips. He wanted the little lad to meet President Lincoln.

Word was sent in to Lincoln that my father wanted his little son — a grandson of Jonathan Latimer — to meet him. It was arranged for. My father took Frederick, then not over four years of age, to a hotel where Lincoln was staying. The little lad was taken from his father by a soldier, and led down a long hall with doors on each side, until he reached a certain door which the soldier opened, and shoving the little lad in, closed it behind him. (Told to me by my brother Frederick L. Wells.)

At a table in this room were three men — one, Lincoln, and the other two Generals. The little lad who did not like being separated from his father was just about to cry when Lincoln spoke to him, "Come over here, sonny. I know who you are," and with his long arms placed the little lad in his lap and went on with the business he was discussing, every once in a while addressing some remark to the little lad. My brother said he will never forget how all his fears from the separation from his father left him, and he could have sat on those knees indefinitely. Pretty soon he was taken back to his father.

After the crops of 1831 were gathered, and a little girl Louisa was born, August 15, 1831, my grandfather with his family went to Knox County, Illinois, where he built a log cabin in a grove called Cherry Grove. His nearest neighbor was over five miles away. He had finished the cabin except that he had no boards for a door. The opening was covered by a heavy blanket which swung loose from the top.

Grandfather was compelled to take the team and drive some distance to get supplies, and he filled the log cabin with plenty of wood for fire, for he did not expect to return for two days.

After dark and supper, and just before going to bed, the children began to play church, which consisted of Alexander, the boy then four years old, yelling at the top of his voice. Finally my Grandmother heard the cry of a wolf followed by other wolf cries. She hurriedly put the children to bed and built a roaring fire in the fireplace. Soon the house was surrounded by wolves. At times they would push back the blanket before the door and be frightened away by the fire and the swinging back of the blanket. Grandfather returned the following day and the door was made and hung.

At another time when Grandfather had gone away, expecting to return before dark, Grandmother who was with the children outside the cabin heard what she supposed was Grandfather's call. She answered it and it came nearer and nearer until she discovered it was the call of a panther which she saw moving among the trees. She hurried the children and herself into the cabin.

Cherry Grove was used by the Indians as a camping place and cemetery. They used to hang up on the swinging branches of the trees the little bodies of their dead papooses who had been bound up and strapped to a board. (Told to me by Mother.)

Grandfather made friends with the Indians and neither he nor his family were ever molested.

Five other children were born in this log cabin. William Marion, born January 28, 1833; James Wesley, born June 22, 1834; Anna Elizabeth, born June 21, 1836; Clara Ellen, born October 26, 1837 (my mother), and Joseph Franklin, born April 15, 1840. (G.)

In 1837 Grandfather began cutting down the black walnut trees and making the brick for the building of the house that took the place of the log cabin. In 1841 the home was completed and the fireplace mantel before which we now are, was placed in the large living-room.

In 1842 the last child was born, Jonathan Columbus, born May 5, 1842. (G.)

As I remember the place in 1874 the house faced west, and to the south of the house was a large yard containing some three or more acres of land. It was a beautiful yard with a driveway shaded by trees. To the front and right of the house was an extensive flower garden and between the front part and back part of the house was a hall opening toward the yard on one side and toward the flower garden on the other. Back of the house was the wood-shed, the smoke house, the tool shed, and the cider press. Beyond these was a large barn and pastures running to the railway 2,000 or more feet away. The public highway ran north and south to the west of the house and across the highway was what was left of the beautiful Cherry Grove with a brook running through it. In the Grove about one-half a mile away was the cemetery.

Since 1831 the country had settled fast and Grandfather was the most important and prosperous figure of the community. He ran a store and before the railroad was built he used to travel several times a year to Chicago for the purchase of stock. When the railway was built, he furnished the ties. He helped build the Burlington branch of the railway.

He was greatly loved, and during his last illness, the night before his death, the large yard was filled with people some of whom came with their wagons from 25 miles away. Bulletins were constantly issued by the doctor from the sick chamber and when he died the sorrow of the gathered throng was pathetic. He died on August 4, 1866, at 9.20 A.M. (See letter of J. C. Latimer.)

On the day of the funeral every place of business was closed and marshals were appointed to manage the crowd that attended. The procession was so long that the services at the cemetery were completed before the procession at the house had finished forming.

The following day a meeting was held at the Methodist Church, and a committee appointed to care for the poor of the

town (told to me by Mother). Such was the life of a man who held no public office.

I cherish a letter written to my brother and myself while our Mother was in Europe, about two months before Grandfather died. The letter is as follows:

"June 2nd '66

To Freddy, Arthur and Walter Wells my Dear Grandchildren

I wo'ld like to see you all. Hope you are well and enjoying yourselves. Wo'ldnt you like to come to Cherry Grove and see your friends here and see your colt and pigs. You will come down with your mother when she comes home and see us. The grass is nice and green for your colt and the birds sing nice every morning and we have some nice little colts and your Grandmother has a great many chickens. Give our love to your Grandpa and Grandma Wells, also to all the friends. Write us a letter

Yours Grandpa

J. LATIMER."

Many are the stories that have persisted during these years concerning Grandfather's life. Among them are the following:

In the early days before the railways were built, Grandfather used to travel to Chicago to get merchandise. Grandmother, who had suffered so much from privations during their pioneer life, was afraid of poverty. Grandfather on one of his trips had bought for himself a new winter overcoat. Grandmother noticed he did not wear it and finally compelled him to admit he had given it away to a poor neighbor.

While my Father was courting my Mother, they were married in 1857, he was driving with Grandfather when they passed a house where there was a woman with a baby in her arms who looked ill. Grandfather stopped and said, "Mary, your baby does not look well. Do you get good milk for it?" She replied, "John is out of work, but we do the best we can." Grandfather replied, "I have a new milk cow in the pasture, it will be ruined if it is not milked regularly so if John can get the milk regularly it will accommodate us. He can leave the cow in the pasture." (Told to me by Father Frederick C. Wells.)

when grandfather died he left an old colored servant Jack Montgomery who was devoted to him and looked after him and the large sum of money he was wont to carry at [illegible] times. One day a stranger called, the [illegible] of whom Jack did not like. Although the man was unknown to grandfather yet grandfather in his great hospitality invited the man to stay over night. Jack retired going to bed, lay down outside Grandfather's room, to protect him. The stranger during the night noiselessly crept down stairs and was so surprised to find faithful Jack there he left the house at once.

Told to me by Agnes Lahmon Bacon

My Mother told me that when Grandfather died there were many of his cows being milked by poor neighbors.

During the war, the apples were at one time lying on the ground not being gathered. Grandfather asked his sons to gather them and take them to market to sell. The sons neglected to do so and Grandfather as a reproof to them had the apples gathered and loaded on two wagons. He had his young grandson, Eugene Meek, drive one wagon; he drove the other. It was one-half a mile to the village of Abingdon. As he was on his way he passed the house of a widow who had lost her husband in the war. He said, "We will leave some apples with her," which meant that he hunted up a barrel and filled it. That made him think of another poor family and so on. When he reached the store in the village he had less than five bushels of apples to sell and he paid Eugene Meek one dollar not to tell on him. (Told to me by Mother.)

One day a Thomas J. Divan came into my office in Chicago and said, "Your Grandfather was Jonathan Latimer was he not?" I answered "Yes." He said, "He was a wonderful man. One day some boys and I were in his orchard stealing apples when he caught us. He said, 'Howdy, boys, you must not do such a thing as this.' He then took us into the barn and had us get bags and gather the apples, take them to the cider press, and he hunted up jugs and gave us each a jug of cider and then said, 'Don't you boys ever try to steal apples again.' It is needless to say we did not."

Father was one day riding with Grandfather when he saw a man dodging to escape Grandfather's sight. Grandfather called to him. He had done something he knew Grandfather would not approve of. Grandfather talked to the man until he was in tears and expressed his regret for what he had done. (Told to me by Mother.)

Grandfather had an annual pass on the Burlington Railway. One day a young lad from Abingdon working for the Burlington Railway was discharged under suspicious circumstances reflecting

on his honesty. He appealed to Grandfather who went to the President of the road when next in Chicago, personally vouched for the boy's honesty, and he was reinstated.

Twenty-five years afterwards, long after Grandfather's death, my brother, Frederick, had a coupler he believed in. He obtained a letter of introduction from a Mr. Towne connected with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway to his brother, Mr. Towne, General Manager of the Southern Pacific Railway. My brother went West with his letter via Portland. At Portland a private car was attached to the train. It was Mr. Towne's car. My brother sent in his card retaining the letter of introduction. The porter returned and said, "Mr. Towne will see you." As my brother walked in Mr. Towne had my brother's card in hand. My brother handed to him the letter of introduction. Mr. Towne said, "You know F. C. Wells?" My brother answered, "Yes, he is my father." Mr. Towne then said, "You are then a grandson of Jonathan Latimer? You do not need any letter of introduction to me," and he turned the letter of introduction over to his private secretary.

Mr. Towne introduced my brother to C. P. Huntington and all the high officials of the Southern Pacific Railway, made him travelling passenger agent of the road without duties or salary and furnished him with passes throughout the United States, tested out his coupler and finding it good put it on Southern Pacific freight cars and insisted my brother send his family out to California on a visit. Finally my Father, Mother, and two sisters went. Passes were sent and they were sent out to any part of California they desired to visit.

Mr. Towne was the boy my Grandfather had vouched for who was repaying the debt he felt he owed to the memory of that wonderful man.

We three boys, after the Chicago fire in 1871, used to go to Abingdon in the summer time to spend our summers. This was years after Grandfather's death, but everywhere we were beauti-

fully treated as the Grandsons of Jonathan Latimer, and as long as the old conductors remained on the train from Chicago to Abingdon, that were there when Grandfather lived, we were considered under five years of age and paid no fare.

My Mother told me, how in those early days, the Indians passing through Illinois on their way to Washington, used to stop at Grandfather's and at times hugely enjoy coming upon the children suddenly and frightening them and carrying them into the house.

One day an Indian stopped over-night and was asleep before this mantel when a colored man with a knife in his hand entered the house, which was never locked. He was approaching Grandfather's bedroom when the Indian, apparently asleep, seized him and would have killed him except for Grandfather's intervention.

Through my Grandfather there has passed the blood of the Wolcotts, Griswolds, Denisons, Lyndes and Brewsters, which has produced one President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, fifteen Governors of Colonies or States, one Chief Justice of the United States, forty-three Judges of the Supreme and lower courts, and Admiral George Dewey, besides many prominent men, Senators, Congressmen, doctors, and lawyers. There is a tradition in our family that Mary Pope, great grandmother of my grandmother, Nancy West Latimer, was of the blood of James Knox Polk, President of the United States. (S. Pgs. 73-80. History of Ston. 338.)

This, my dear children, is the story that is back of the mantel. Let it be an ideal for us and our descendants, through whom flows this Latimer blood.

—ARTHUR B. WELLS.

Boston, Mass.,
July 9, 1929.

AUTHORITIES

(Abbreviations)

(A.) *American Ancestry.*
(B.) *History of Montville* by H. A. Baker.
(Br.) *Brewster Family* by E. C. B. Jones.
(C.) *History of New London* by F. M. Caulkins.
(D.) *Battles of the U. S.* by Henry B. Dawson.
(G.) *Genealogy Book* of Arthur B. Wells..
(H.) *Abraham Lincoln* by Norman Hapgood.
(His.) *History of Connecticut* by Hallister.
(His. Ston.) *History of Stonington and Genealogies,* by R. A. Wheeler, 1900.
(L.) *Lincoln at New Salem.*
(L.L.) *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by W. E. Barton.
(S.) *Family Histories and Genealogies* by Edward Eldridge Salisbury.
(C.C.) *Centennial Celebration of State of New York,* Saratoga.
(Col.) *Public Records of Connecticut Colonial Records* 1757-1762.
(Cr.) *Creasy, 15 Decisive Battles of the World.*
(Ft.) *Fort Ticonderoga in History* by Helen Ives Gilchrist.
(J.B.) *Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne* by F. J. Huddleston.
(May.) *Signers of the Mayflower Compact* by Anne A. Haxtun.
(N.) *Burgoyne's Campaign and Battle of Bemis Heights* by C. Nielson.
(N.Y.) *New York Colonial Manuscripts.*
(R.) *Romantic Story of the Pilgrims* by A. C. Addison.
(Reg.) *Register of Continental Army Officers* by F. B. Heitman, April, 1775-December, 1738 (Latimer), Revised Edition, 1914.
(Rev.) *Historical Collection of Connecticut During Revolution* by R. R. Hinman.
(Conn.) *Connecticut in the Revolution.*
(C.V.) *Connecticut Valley Historical Society,* Vol. IV.
(Mother.) Mrs. Clara Latimer Wells. Born October 26, 1837.
(Father.) Frederick C. Wells. Born October 10, 1830.
(Aunt Emily.) Mrs. Emily Latimer Chesney. Born January 4, 1826.
(Aunt Lou.) Mrs. Louisa Bacon. Born August 15, 1831.

Note A

The following traditions in our family were verified by my Mother, Aunt Emily and Aunt Lou:

1. That Ann Rutledge helped my Grandmother when she moved near to New Salem with her three little children.

2. That Alexander Latimer, brother of my Grandfather, brought Abraham Lincoln to the house one day where he was introduced to Ann Rutledge.

3. That my Grandfather moved near to New Salem about 1831 and that he and his family knew Abraham Lincoln well.

4. That Colonel Latimer's regiment was led by Arnold in his charges in the Battle of Saratoga and that Latimer lost one-half of his men.

5. That in 1837 Jacob West, the father of my Grandmother, Nancy Latimer, had a law-suit but he had no lawyer. Abraham Lincoln had just been admitted to the bar. He (Jacob West) employed Lincoln. The case was

lost. Jacob West asked Lincoln his fee. Lincoln said he had done no good and refused to take anything, but Jacob West paid him $5.00. Thereupon Lincoln jumped on a box and called out to the crowd about: "Hear ye! Hear ye! I have received from Jacob West my first retainer and am retained as Jacob West's attorney for life."

I examined the court records of 1837 in Springfield for Sangamon County, in Vandalia for Fayette County, and in Petersburg for Menard County, and found that they had insufficient records to identify this case.

That Alexander Latimer and Abraham Lincoln were warm friends and there used to be in existence until burned up by fire in the house of my Uncle Jacob Alexander Latimer in Minnesota, a letter from Abraham Lincoln to Alexander Latimer, after Ann Rutledge's death in which Lincoln said: "Ann is dead and my heart is broken." Alexander was born October 7, 1807; Lincoln February 12, 1809.

My Uncle Joseph F. Latimer, born April 15, 1840, told me that in the book called *The Crossing*, by Winston Churchill, (Macmillan Company), 1904, the route that David Ritchie took is the same that Jacob West and wife took in coming West and that the brother of Joseph Latimer was shot at his side, in the Indian War described in this book.

Alexander Latimer and Nathaniel Latimer came to New Salem prior to 1829. This is proven by the fact that Nathaniel Latimer entered the E.½N.E.¼ Sec. 27.19.7. February 19, 1829. This property was out at Concord Creek adjoining the Rutledge farm and home. As to enter land, you have to live on it, Nathaniel Latimer probably lived at the Rutledge place for the Rutledges in 1829 were building the tavern and mill at New Salem, seven miles away.

When my Grandfather Jonathan Latimer came there with his little family the latter part of 1829 he entered the E.½S.E.¼ of said Section 27 showing that he must have gone to the Rutledge home to live as the Rutledges were then keeping tavern in New Salem and running the mill. As this tavern was a very small building with only five rooms, the whole Rutledge family could not all stay at this tavern and entertain guests it is highly probable that the youngest child, Ann, should have stayed at the old house and helped Grandmother. August 10, 1830, Nathaniel Latimer conveyed to Alexander Latimer a part of land in section 27 he had entered in 1829 and all of them voted in the election held in New Salem in 1831 (L.L. Vol 1, pgs. 485-6). At this election Lincoln acted as Clerk.

See certified copies of deeds, photo copies of election poll sheets of 1831 and record of entries as shown in Recorder's Office of Menard County, at Petersburg, Illinois, in possession of Arthur B. Wells.

Note B

For additional accounts of Colonel Jonathan Latimer see:
American Ancestry, Vol. 1, pg. 48.
Connecticut Genealogy Latimer, Vol. 10, pg. 203; Vol. 4, pgs. 1904-5.
For additional accounts of Battle of Saratoga, see:
Trevelyan (Sir G. O.) *The American Revolution.*
Burgoyne's Campaign and St. Leger's Expedition by William L. Stone.
Burgoyne's Invasion of 1777 by S. A. Drake.
The British Invasion from the North by J. P. Baxter.
The Real America in Romance, Vol. IV, chap. XVII.

Note C

July 1, 1775, Nathan Hale was made Lieut. Captain, Company 3, Seventh Connecticut Regiment. It was stationed at Camp Winter Hill guarding the Charlestown Neck. (Letter of Nathan Hale dated October 19, 1775, to Betsy Christopher in library of Yale College.)

Burgoyne and his men were confined as prisoners of war at the Winter Hill Camp, Prospect Hill Camp and Union Hill Camp. (Old Landmarks of Boston by S. A. Drake.)

Note D

From this charge of breach of military law in not leading his regiment forward and preventing the enemy from attacking and burning the Town of New London September 6, 1781, Colonel Jonathan Latimer was acquitted with hônor by court martial. (Pg. 113, *Battle of Groton Heights*, by Wm. W. Harris, revised by Charles Allyn, New London, 1882.)

On September 6, 1775, Jonathan Latimer was made Major of the Seventh Connecticut Regiment, and on January 1, 1776, Nathan Hale was commissioned Captain (original commission in Yale Library).

In September, 1776, he entered the British lines and on September 21, 1776, was captured and hung the following morning as a spy. His last words were: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." He graduated from Yale College in 1773 and roomed in South Middle, now known as Connecticut Hall—the room beneath the one occupied by myself. In front of South Middle is erected a beautiful statue of Nathan Hale.